

JANUARY 19, 1978

THE U.S. IN A MUSICAL GROOVE

ANNCR: THE NAMES OF MOST OF THE STARS IN THE AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC FIRMAMENT MAY NOT BE PARTICULARLY NEW BUT THE SALES OF MUSICAL RECORDINGS IN THE U.S. SPINS EVER HIGHER. WITH THIS REPORT FROM VOA'S LARRY LESUEUR, HERE IS-----.

VOICE: RECORD INDUSTRY OFFICIALS HAPPILY NOTE THAT MORE THAN 2 THOUSAND MILLION DOLLARS WOTH OF MUSICAL RECORDINGS WERE SOLD IN THE UNITED STATES LAST YEAR. IN FACT, THE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING DEMAND WAS SO GREAT THAT MANUFACTURING MATERIALS FOR THE RECORDINGS WERE IN SHORT SUPPLY.

THE DIMENSIONS OF THE CURRENT U.S. MUSICAL RECORDING BOOM MAY BE JUDGED FROM THE FACT THAT IN 1966 ABOUT 900 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF RECORDS WERE SOLD IN THE UNITED STATES. TEN YEARS LATER THAT FIGURE HAD NEARLY DOUBLED TO ONE THOUSAND 900 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH. SOME OF THIS MARKED INCREASE MIGHT BE LAID TO INFLATION BUT ACTUALLY RETAIL RECORD PRICES IN THE U.S. HAVE INCREASED LITTLE IN THOSE TEN YEARS. IT IS PLAIN THAT RECORDED MUSIC REPRESENTS BIG BUSINESS IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE SALES OF RECORDINGS HERE RANGE ACROSS THE SPECTRUM FROM CLASSICAL MUSIC TO JAZZ AND POPULAR SIGNERS SUCH AS FRANK SINATRA AND STEVIE WONDER TO HUMOROUS ENTERTAINERS. HOWEVER, INDUSTRY OFFICIALS SAY THE BIGGEST BOOM HAS COME IN THE SALES OF ROCK MUSIC RECORDINGS. INDEED, ROCK MUSIC WHICH WAS ONCE REGARDED AS FAVORED ONLY BY TEEN-AGERS REBELLING AGAINST PARENTS THEY CONSIDERED OLD-FASHIONED HAS NOW BECOME

VOICE: RESPECTABLE. IN FACT, RECORDING COMPANY OFFICIALS SAY MOST
(CONT'D) OF THEIR BIG CHRISTMAS SALES THIS YEAR WERE TO PEOPLE OVER
18 YEARS OLD.

IN THE 1950'S TEEN-AGERS WERE ATTRACTED TO THE BIG BEAT OF
THE NEW ROCK-AND-ROLL MUSIC BECAUSE OF ITS VITALITY, AND
POSSIBLY ALSO BECAUSE THEIR PARENTS, WHO GREW UP WITH THE
MORE MELODIOUS "BIG BAND" SOUND, COULD NOT STAND THE NEW
MUSIC OR ITS LOUD AMPLICATION.

THEN, IN THE 1960'S ROCK MUSIC SEEMED TO REPRESENT THE SOUND
EMANATING THE SO-CALLED BLACK GHETTOS, NEWLY LIBERATED BY
THE HISTORIC CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION. IT APPEARED TO REFLECT
THE APPROVAL BY AMERICAN TEEN-AGERS OF THE SWIFT CURRENTS
OF SOCIAL CHANGE SWEEPING ACROSS THE LAND. OF COURSE, MANY
OF THE 1960'S TEENAGERS ARE NOW YOUNG PARENTS THEMSELVES.
SO, MANY AMERICAN FAMILIES COMPRISE PEOPLE WHO LISTEN PRIMARIL
TO VARIOUS FORMS OF ROCK MUSIC.

IN FACT, SOME OF THE BEST-SELLING ARTISTS SUCH AS OLIVIA
NEWTON-JOHN, CARLY SIMON, LINDA RONSTADT, NEIL DIAMOND AND
OTHERS BRIDGE THE GENERATIONS FROM PRE-TEEN-AGERS, TEEN-AGERS
TO THEIR PARENTS. THIS BRANCH OF ROCK MUSIC IS CALLED THE
CONTEMPORARY SOUND. EVEN OLDER PEOPLE HAVE ADJUSTED TO THE
CHANGE.

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